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Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations

Culture of peace

Intercultural, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of activities carried out by the main United Nations entities involved in the field of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. The report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 60/4 and 64/81, covers a wide range of topics, including the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, the third Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, the rights-based approach to the issue and the promotion of United Nations objectives through outreach and collaboration with faith-based organizations, as well as communication, awareness-raising and educational activities in that field. The report should be read in conjunction with the annual progress report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 60/4, entitled "Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations", and 64/81, entitled "Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace".

2. In resolution 60/4, the General Assembly invited the United Nations system to continue to encourage dialogue among civilizations and to formulate ways to promote it, and requested the Secretary-General to explore enhancing implementation mechanisms for the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted by the Assembly in resolution 56/6, and to report thereon to it at its sixty-fifth session.

3. In its resolution 64/81, the latest of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly annually since its fifty-ninth session on the theme of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the Assembly inter alia invited the Secretary-General to organize a special activity to launch the celebration of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, and to report to it at its sixty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution.

4. Intercultural, intercivilizational and interreligious issues are closely connected and, in practice, are often dealt with without clear distinction between the three. In addition, since its creation in 2005, the Alliance of Civilizations has been the main vehicle for enhancing dialogue among civilizations, as called for in General Assembly resolution 60/4, and its work has traditionally been reported on by the Secretary-General in his report on intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Recognizing this interconnectedness and in the context of continued efforts to streamline documentation for the Assembly, the present report highlights the main activities undertaken by relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to implement resolution 60/4 and resolution 64/81.

5. Within the United Nation system, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) remains the main institution dealing with all culture-related issues on a large scale. More recently, the Alliance of Civilizations has organized high-profile events on those issues, placing them at the forefront of the political agenda. The contributions of these United Nations entities are therefore of particular relevance to the present report and are highlighted in its first two sections, devoted to the International Year on the Rapprochement of Cultures, which is being celebrated in 2010, led by UNESCO, and to the Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in May 2010.

6. In addition, other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and Secretariat entities have continued to play an active role, and have even diversified their activities and increased their outreach, in this field of work. Therefore, the present report draws extensively on the rich contributions of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The contributions of the whole system are presented in the three subsequent sections of the report, according to the main focus of the activities carried out. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to play the role of focal point and

coordinator within the United Nations system in the preparation of the present document, in accordance with paragraph 12 of resolution 64/81.

II. International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, 2010

7. Pursuant to resolution 46, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at its thirty-fourth session in 2007, the Assembly proclaimed 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. Its primary goal is to show that diversity enriches humankind and is a source of creativity and innovation.

Leading role of UNESCO for the International Year

8. The Assembly designated UNESCO the lead agency for the International Year, which was launched at UNESCO headquarters on 18 February 2010. On that occasion, the Director-General of UNESCO convened a High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, comprised of prominent political, intellectual and religious personalities from all regions of the world.

9. The awareness-raising implicit in the goal of the Year has entailed the production and broad dissemination of informational materials and the organization of and participation in several international and regional conferences. To date, over 700 activities are envisaged within the framework of the International Year. The variety of projects presented in fields such as the arts, education and youth are proof of the different forms that dialogue and the rapprochement of cultures can take.

10. Great importance was attached not only to the media, but also to public cultural events such as festivals, concerts and exhibits involving the broad participation of various segments of society and, in particular, young people as the primary focus of the International Year. Of the 124 activities planned, the schedule of events currently includes 63 that are implemented or organized by UNESCO.

11. In January 2010, UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Felissimo Social Design Network, launched a poster contest, "Culture Counts", in which designers from all over the world were invited to depict their interpretation and understanding of the "rapprochement of cultures". The contest received 1,187 entries from 82 countries in all five regions of the world. The winner, Diego Rossi (Brazil), was able to attend the International Festival of Diversity and his poster was exhibited at UNESCO headquarters in May 2010 and widely distributed by UNESCO throughout the world.

12. Of the 733 planned activities by all participants (member States, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and UNESCO institutes and chairs), 300 have been or are being implemented. The list of these activities, which is updated weekly, may be consulted on the website of the International Year (http://www.unesco.org/en/rapprochement-of-cultures/). Of particular note is the renewed interest in the Year on the part of member States, who have sponsored most of the activities announced thus far; to date, 59 States have participated. There has also been an increase in the number of partnerships between member States and civil society through member States' support for projects implemented by associations and foundations. Civil society plays a role in the Year, with 96 projects implemented worldwide.

Activities at United Nations Headquarters

13. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/81, in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to organize a special activity to celebrate the International Year, a special event was organized on 21 April 2010 at United Nations Headquarters. The President of the sixty-fourth session of the Assembly and the Secretary-General made statements at the event which was organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The meeting heard different voices, each reflecting on a specific dimension of public action to promote the rapprochement of cultures.

14. At that event, the Vice-Minister of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan presented the unique experience of his country in establishing political and administrative institutions aimed at ensuring dialogue and understanding among the various cultures that compose Kazakhstan. The Executive Director of UNFPA presented the work of her organization to develop a culture-sensitive approach to development, "development through a cultural lens", through which United Nations development objectives are promoted while dialogue within and among cultures is enhanced. A Commissioner for the Canadian Truth and Conciliation Commission for Boarding Schools, presented an indigenous peoples' perspective on the rapprochement of cultures and advocated the recognition of indigenous cultures. In addition, key forthcoming activities in the course of the Year were presented by the Director of UNESCO in New York and by the Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, who called for the involvement of Member States in the activities planned for the Year.

15. The 2010 Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council provided another opportunity to address the rapprochement of cultures in the context of the theme of the Review, namely "gender equality and the empowerment of women". As part of the activities around the Annual Ministerial Review and in the context of the International Year, a 45-minute television debate on "Women's empowerment, development cooperation and culture" was organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNFPA, UNESCO and United Nations Television on 30 June 2010. The debate featured the Director General of UNESCO, the Executive Director of UNFPA, Professor Kwame Anthony Appiah, of Princeton University and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Global Fund for Women. It was moderated by television journalist Ms. Daljit Dhaliwal.

16. The debate was based on the recognition that culture, which determines social norms, plays a significant role in how societies perceive women's roles and place in development, leading to gender stereotypes that affect the pace at which countries improve the status of women. In that context, participants recognized that international development agencies could not ignore or marginalize culture. The debate also addressed the important nexus between those different issues and highlighted how promoting cultures and their rapprochement can contribute to the ultimate goal of gender equity. The debate can be accessed at www.un.org/en/ecosoc/tvdebate.

Other activities of the United Nations system to celebrate the Year

17. UNICEF has contributed to the International Year at the national and global levels. For example, in Bangladesh, UNICEF worked with indigenous women and

children in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, through a community-based approach to integrated basic services where religious communities are important partners in promoting cultural and social cohesion. The UNICEF Office in Russia supports activities to promote peace and tolerance in the North Caucasus region. Since 2005, UNICEF has supported the Junior 8 (J8) Summit, a youth forum linked to the annual meeting of the Group of Eight (G8). That forum has provided young people from around the world with an opportunity to express and exchange their opinions. UNICEF also contributes to increased cultural solidarity at the global level through its Education for Development Network in National Committees for UNICEF, the Connecting Classrooms initiative, the Child-Friendly Cities initiative, Teach UNICEF educational materials and, more recently, through "Bag of tricks" on climate change.

18. The United Nations Information Centres have promoted the objectives of the Year though a wide range of country-level activities, as described in section V below. The United Nations Information Centre in Bogota has designed a special web page to promote the Year.

III. United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its Third Forum

19. The General Assembly expressed its continuing support of work of the Alliance of Civilizations in resolution 64/14. Under the leadership of Jorge Sampaio, the former President of Portugal, who was appointed by the Secretary-General High Representative for the Alliance in 2007, the Alliance of Civilizations has continued to promote dialogue that delivers change on the ground. Under the second Implementation Plan, actions to facilitate such dialogue include national and regional strategies for achieving Alliance of Civilizations objectives, as well as projects, particularly in the areas of the media, youth, education and migration, that open up avenues of practical cooperation and narrow the areas of disagreement, thus building trust and mutual respect within and among increasingly diverse societies. Those activities constitute a concrete illustration of United Nations efforts to implement the programme of action contained in the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations.

20. Key to those actions is effective partnership with Governments and intergovernmental organizations. A growing Group of Friends, currently consisting of 122 Governments and international organizations, provides the necessary political support and the space for consultations on challenges and priorities. The annual forums (Madrid, 2008; Istanbul, 2009; and Rio de Janeiro, 2010) provide a platform for interaction between Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

21. During the reporting period, the work of the Alliance has been focused on (a) encouraging the development of national and regional strategies for the Alliance, (b) consolidating and expanding Alliance projects as envisaged in the second Implementation Plan and (c) globalizing the Alliance through preparations for the annual forum, held in Rio in May 2010. The first of those objectives was accomplished through the adoption of national action plans for intercultural dialogue by almost a third of the national membership (30 countries) of the Alliance and a regional strategy by South-East Europe, as well as preparations for the adoption of a regional strategy in the Mediterranean region and preliminary

reflections on the feasibility of strategies for Latin America and Central Asia. More details on all of those objectives are available in the detailed report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, submitted under the same agenda items.

22. Progress continued to be made, with the help of partners, on the second objective, that of consolidating and expanding Alliance projects. The Alliance conducted training for journalists in Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, North America, Europe and the Arab world to strengthen their reporting and writing skills on political and social issues; expanded the Global Expert Finder to 350 experts from around the world; and helped to build networks of emerging leaders from minority communities through media workshops. Several academic networks of relevance to Alliance themes were expanded, such as in the areas of media literacy (33 partners), education about religions and beliefs (18 partners) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Research Network (16 academic institutions and networks, comprising over 200 institutions); and work was begun on identifying collaborative research opportunities. The pilot phase of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Fellowship Programme for emerging leaders, developed in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the authorities of Qatar and the German Marshal Fund of the United States, was completed successfully in March 2010.

23. The second edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund was launched and carried out very successfully. The competitive Youth Solidarity Fund programme provides seed funding of up to US$ 30,000 to youth organizations that advance intercultural and interfaith dialogue and carry out practical projects. During the 2010 edition of the Fund, 530 proposals were submitted from 99 countries on all continents and 18 projects were funded. The Alliance and its youth partners were closely involved in consultations within the United Nations system in planning activities for the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, launched in August 2010. In connection with the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, an outreach strategy has been implemented and preparations have begun for the first global convention of the youth movement, to be held in Baku, in October 2010. Young people from 36 countries submitted 150 videos for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations-International Organization for Migration (IOM) first Plural +Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity and Social Inclusion. In addition, the Migration Programme of the Alliance designed and launched the Online Community on Migration and Integration, in May 2010. Developed in partnership with IOM the Online Community is a resource that highlights successful models of integration in order to counter stereotypes and promotes the further involvement of all stakeholders in integration.

24. Achieving the third objective, that of globalizing the Alliance of Civilizations, was helped by the hosting of the Third Forum of the Alliance by the Government of Brazil from 27 to 29 May 2010, in Rio de Janeiro. The Third Forum brought together a powerful network of several thousand political and corporate leaders, mayors, civil society activists, young people, journalists, foundations, international organizations and religious leaders. Apart from holding several plenary meetings, thematic sessions and workshops, the Forum explored cutting-edge initiatives that used imagination and creativity to build cooperation among cultures through a "Marketplace of ideas" competition. The competition was won by nine grass-roots

projects that were deemed worthy of being scaled up and replicated. The next step in the development of the "Marketplace of ideas" will be a scheme to support those initiatives throughout the year and connect them with opportunities for networking, fund-raising, scaling up and replication.

25. The Rio Forum also featured a strong youth component, with 140 young participants from over 60 countries and several significant outcomes and announcements. They included the inauguration of the first two Dialogue Cafés in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro; the negotiation, conclusion or renewal of agreements with international bodies, including UNESCO, the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALECSO), and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; the second phase of the Fellowships Programme, due to start in November 2010; the launch of the Online Community on Migration and Integration, in partnership with IOM; and the launch of the third edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund. The Forum further established the Alliance as the premier global platform, anchored in the United Nations, for addressing the good governance of cultural diversity.

26. The Rio Forum was also an opportunity for broadening cooperation between UNESCO and the Alliance, through the renewal of the cooperation agreement between the two entities. That agreement provides for the implementation of projects (i) to develop educational, cultural and scientific content to enhance dialogue, (ii) to intensify cultural exchanges among youth, (iii) to highlight the role of the media in that field and (iv) to consolidate the *Vademecum interculturel*, an audiovisual awareness-raising tool to combat erroneous collective representations and foster better understanding between the Arab-Muslim world and the other regions. The ambition behind that awareness-raising tool is to chronicle the indelible imprints that Arab-Muslim civilization has left and show how it has constantly interacted with the sciences, the arts, philosophy, literature and other disciplines.

27. The next Forums of the Alliance will be held in Qatar in 2011 and in Austria in 2012.

IV. Promoting intercultural dialogue through education and communication

28. In addition to the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and the Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations system has continued to undertake a wide range of educational and communication activities aimed at promoting dialogue among cultures and civilizations. The present section presents, in a non-exhaustive way, key activities carried out by major United Nations actors in this field.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

29. UNESCO has long focused on ways and means to eliminate ignorance and prejudice and to correct erroneous collective representations in the way cultures relate to one other, in order to build mutual trust conducive to a lasting peace among and within societies. Building on the organization's experience in the promotion of mutual understanding and peace, the objectives set out for the biennium 2010-2011

are (i) to strengthen conditions, capacities and modalities for intercultural dialogue and (ii) to mainstream principles of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue into national policies. The aim is to raise awareness of the benefits of cultural diversity and the necessity of encouraging intercultural dialogue, which includes interreligious dialogue. Central to those efforts is the need to respect the right to freedom of expression and non-discrimination, as stipulated in all the major human rights instruments, as well as the right to freedom of conviction and conscience, which implies respect for sacred beliefs, values and religious and cultural symbols.

30. In pursuing that objective, UNESCO acted alone or in partnership with the African Union, the Council of Europe, ALECSO, ISESCO, OIC, the Alliance of Civilizations, the Asia-Europe Meeting, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, United Cities and Local Governments, UNESCO Chairs and non-governmental organizations.

31. Within that framework, a number of new activities were undertaken. For example, the programme entitled "Rabindranath Tagore, Pablo Neruda and Aimé Césaire for a reconciled universal" is aimed at building on the message of those three outstanding writers as a reflection at the highest level of the interrelationship between the universal and the particular in understanding the complex processes of modernity. It is intended to bring together countries and generations, creators and intellectuals in concrete programmes in all of the fields of competence of UNESCO.

32. At the crossroads of intellectual, scientific and political thinking, the new UNESCO World Report, *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, takes stock of what is being said, thought and done in the name of cultural diversity and dialogue, and considers the conditions that are necessary for diversity to become an asset, rather than a threat and a source of renewal for public policies in the service of development, social cohesion and peace.

33. The eighth Summit of the Heads of State of South-East European Countries, which aimed to reinforce the critical role of culture as the cornerstone of mutual understanding and stability in the subregion, was held in Istanbul in June 2010. It notably led to a renewed commitment to the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the subregion, which was expressed in the Istanbul Declaration.

34. A network linking media and information literacy to intercultural dialogue was established in close cooperation with the Alliance of Civilizations. It is foreseen that the activities of this network will promote intercultural research, meetings, publications, training activities and content production relating to media and information literacy and its application to cross-cultural interreligious dialogue and global cooperation. The network will also serve as a research centre and media literacy observatory.

35. The promotion of contemporary creation and the preservation of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, are of the utmost significance as they reveal the many different interactions that have shaped the history, the memory and the identity of our heritage, and continue to inspire creativity. Successful initiatives, such as the UNESCO World Heritage in Young Hands programme have demonstrated the role of heritage as a common denominator and unifying factor for cooperation and reconciliation.

36. In order to promote knowledge and understanding of exchanges among peoples and cultures, which are often neglected or distorted, UNESCO is currently working with its member States to develop educational materials based on its Routes of Dialogue projects, such as those on the Silk Roads, the Slave Route, the Olive Roads, the Arabia Plan, and the Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe) and its programme of general and regional histories.

37. UNESCO facilitates cooperation between European and Arab States in the revision of history and social studies textbooks, which should not only ensure more accurate representation of other cultures and beliefs but also provide a platform for discussing sensitive points of common history openly and constructively, including through the use of local and national languages. In addition, within the framework of the Arabia Plan, a seminar on the topic of "Music as an Instrument of Dialogue between Cultures: the Arab Contribution", was held on 2 June 2010 (Arab Culture Day), together with an exhibit on Arab musical instruments and calligraphy and a concert of musical works that illustrate this artistic interaction.

38. The *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education*, together with a toolkit for educators on how to teach respect for and understanding of different faiths and ethical beliefs, developed in partnership with UNICEF and the Arigato Foundation, are intended to prepare teachers to educate for dialogue.

39. In the same vein, UNESCO is developing "A comparative analysis and global perspective of regional studies on intercultural competence". This study emphasizes the importance of valuing each other and bridging differences through relationship-building.

Department of Public Information of the United Nations

40. As part of its outreach to the non-governmental community, the Department of Public Information initiated a series of briefings entitled "Focus on faith", with discussions on "Islam in the media: unveiling the truth" and "Building bridges between cultures: a closer look at Hinduism". A briefing on "The impact of cultural expression as a means of resistance to the transatlantic slave trade" was organized for non-governmental organizations in the context of the International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 2010, the theme of which was "Expressing our freedom through culture", demonstrating the critical role of the religious and cultural traditions upon which enslaved peoples relied to strengthen their resolve to seek freedom, maintain societal values and retain belief systems.

41. Websites were created in the six official languages, and coverage arranged, for the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, and the International Day for Tolerance. Specific events covered included the issuance of the Human Rights Council report on defamation of religion, the establishment of the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures and the agency's designation of Zaha Hadid as UNESCO Artist for Peace, and meetings of the Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, with a particular focus on the participation of young people. Products on those and related themes by the United Nations News Centre, United Nations Radio, United Nations Photo and United Nations Television were picked up by media aggregators, redisseminated by broadcast partners and made accessible to civil society organizations and the general public around the world free of charge.

42. A new initiative, the United Nations Academic Impact, was joined by more than 300 institutions of higher learning and research ahead of its scheduled formal launch at the end of 2010 and was also endorsed by more than 30 international networks of universities and institutes. The initiative seeks to afford an opportunity to its members to align a specific activity or project each year with the mandate and objectives of the United Nations and they are asked to agree to a set of universally accepted principles, including a commitment to promoting intercultural dialogue and understanding, and the "unlearning" of intolerance, through education. The initiative encourages online dialogue on the subject through its Facebook page, www.facebook.com/ImpactUN.

43. The network of 63 United Nations information centres promotes dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions through a variety of activities and communication tools, often in partnership with Governments, non-governmental organizations and the academic community. Activities were carried out by the United Nations Information Centres in Panama City (television programmes on values and cultural diversity), Lomé (participation in the tenth Cultural Festival of West African UNESCO Clubs), Manama (substantive and media support to a five-day dialogue between German and Arab youth), and Moscow (publications and exchange of perspectives of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan; presentations at a youth peacekeeping festival; and, together with the Network of Schools for Peace, the organization of a wreath-laying ceremony in which the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the capital city was highlighted), the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels (support to the 14th "Fax for peace, fax for tolerance" competition in Spilimbergo, Italy), the United Nations Information Centres in Pretoria (interactive discussion on tolerance with students and teachers), La Paz (organization of a camp with the Mealla Foundation about the culture of peace; support to the "Convivir, sembrar paz" campaign organized by the World Bank and the United Nations country team for high school students; and participation in the first International Symposium on Inter-cultural Education, in La Paz), Tehran (support to a painting and peace poster competition among some 200 Afghan children in the Islamic Republic of Iran), and New Delhi (organization of a 12-day campaign which ran from the International Day of Peace to the International Day of Non-Violence, and a two-day Children's Consultation and Thinkers' Forum with the participation of non-governmental organizations, including representatives of different faiths).

44. On the International Day for Tolerance, the United Nations Information Centre in Baku screened for students at Khazar University a film entitled "Knowledge is the beginning", depicting the power of tolerance to bring people together and overcome religious and political differences. The United Nations Information Centre in Manama co-organized with the media and non-governmental organizations a seminar on promoting dialogue and combating chauvinism. The "Just like you" campaign in Brazil was launched by the United Nations country team. Consisting of 10 videos of 30 seconds' duration each, it highlights the rights of various groups, including the African-Brazilian population and people living with HIV/AIDS, with a common message, "We are just like you". The videos were shown on television across the country.

V. Promoting interreligious dialogue through outreach and collaboration with faith-based organizations

45. Another valuable contribution of the United Nations system to promoting interreligious dialogue consists in engaging with faith-based organizations and involving them in its policy and advocacy work. Such initiatives have a double positive effect, namely, they bring together peoples from different faiths to discuss common issues and they associate those groups with United Nations development objectives.

46. Several United Nations organizations participated in the Parliament of World Religions held in Melbourne, Australia, in December 2009. They joined forces to hold a meeting on the collaboration of the United Nations with religious communities in support of United Nations development objectives, at which the successes and challenges involved in their outreach to faith-based organizations were discussed. That meeting was also conceived as an opportunity for religious communities to build bridges with multilateral organizations.

United Nations Population Fund

47. UNFPA continues to support interreligious capacity-building and to undertake knowledge management and advocacy through its unique Global Interfaith Network on Population and Development, as well as with indigenous peoples. At the national, regional and global levels, those partnerships are being expanded and results-based programmatic interventions consolidated to further the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals.

48. At the regional level, the UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Office convened its unique regional Steering Group, composed of representative faith-based organizations to advance the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Consultations and partnerships with Steering Committee members strengthen multi-faith community partnerships to enhance service delivery and advocacy for women's health and gender equality.

49. In the Asian and Pacific region, UNFPA has supported various initiatives led by faith-based organizations to empower young women faith leaders to address reproductive rights and gender-based violence, and to strengthen their capacity to deliver services and to advocate for rights. UNFPA is collaborating with the Women, Faith and Development Alliance in the Asian and Pacific region on an inter-faith initiative to identify which faith-based organizations and male faith leaders are addressing violence against women. This will be followed by a series of regional consultations in 2010-11 with the objective of enhancing the capacities of faith-based organizations to advocate against violence against women.

50. In both the African and Arab States regions, UNFPA is developing gender-based violence strategies tailored to sociocultural realities. UNFPA promotes intercultural dialogue and the capacity of civil society, including faith-based organizations, to advocate for gender-responsive budgeting and against violence against women. The UNFPA Arab States Regional Office has established a regional network of faith-based organizations and is currently developing a strategy for engagement. Respectful of religious and cultural dynamics, the Regional Office is

launching an initiative in 2010 to promote greater male involvement in reproductive health and gender equality.

51. At the country level, UNFPA Belize, in response to increasing neonatal death rates among the Mayan population, collaborated with the national authorities on an initiative to improve maternal and neonatal care and to organize several rural health forums, including with Mayan women. A National Women's Group Symposium was organized with the participation of both indigenous and faith-based women's groups. The topics addressed at the symposium were the recruitment of indigenous women as members of community groups; intercultural dialogue; resource mobilization; and advocacy on women's rights.

52. UNFPA Egypt has accomplished noteworthy progress in the area of knowledge management and promoting an enabling sociocultural environment supportive of gender equality and reproductive rights, through its work with Al-Azhar University. A comprehensive reference manual on Islamic sharia and reproductive health, and a training manual for Muslim preachers were jointly produced.

53. UNFPA Guyana continues to support faith-based organizations, including Christian, Muslim and Hindu groups, to establish adolescent- and youth-friendly spaces which provide information on sexual and reproductive health, and the reduction of gender-based violence. UNFPA has also conducted sessions to enhance the role of religious leaders in ending violence against women and supported the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs through training on sexual and reproductive health, gender and life skills issues.

54. UNFPA also continues to support relevant activities in Djibouti, India, Indonesia, the occupied Palestinian territories, the Philippines, Somalia, the Sudan, Thailand and Turkey.

55. UNFPA was a strong sponsor of the Women Deliver Conference held in Washington, D.C., in June 2010, the largest gathering of experts from around the world on maternal and reproductive health. As part of its interreligious knowledge management initiatives, UNFPA facilitated discussions on linkages between culture, faith and development. The discussions were attended by male and female interreligious representatives from different regions, who addressed the strengths of faith-based organizations in working for women's health and empowerment.

56. UNFPA in partnership with the Union Theological Seminary, jointly hosted a consultation in New York on "The spirit of development: women, faith and reproductive health". Participants from academia and faith-based organizations shared best practices and identified ways to strengthen and institutionalize faith-based engagement. Also in the context of knowledge management, UNFPA organized a presentation with the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations, to discuss common interventions relating to HIV/AIDS, maternal health, violence against women and family planning.

57. UNFPA partnered the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in the development of their strategic framework for engagement with faith-based organizations to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Also in partnership with UNAIDS and with the United Nations System Staff College, UNFPA will convene a three-day strategic exchange for staff on "Religion and development" at the end of 2010. In further support of the building of interfaith capacities to empower women, UNFPA endorsed the launching of the

North American Women of Faith Network by Religions for Peace at the 2010 session of the Commission on the Status of Women. In partnership with the Commonwealth, UNFPA will conduct a human rights capacity-building workshop for sub-Saharan faith-based organizations and traditional leaders in the fall of 2010.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

58. UNAIDS continues to promote interreligious dialogue and collaboration through work at the global, regional and country levels. In December 2009, at the Parliament of the World's Religions, the Joint Programme launched a new strategic framework for partnership with faith-based organizations in its response to HIV. The framework is the result of an 18-month consultation process between UNAIDS, faith-based organizations, networks of people living with HIV, Government representatives and technical experts. The framework is intended to provide a structure for the development of workplans and partnerships in response to AIDS.

59. UNAIDS, in partnership with the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Cordaid and the International Network of Religious Leaders Living with and Affected by HIV, hosted a Summit of High-level Religious Leaders on the Response to HIV in the Netherlands, in March 2010. The meeting explored opportunities for religious leaders to promote universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in their communities and to speak out against the stigma and discrimination affecting people living with HIV. It brought together some 40 Baha'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh leaders, the Executive Directors of UNAIDS and UNFPA, the AIDS Ambassadors of the Netherlands and Sweden, and leaders and representatives of networks of people living with HIV and other organizations.

60. Regional and country-level dialogue and collaboration between UNAIDS faith communities during 2009 included:

- In Indonesia, the Indonesian Interfaith Network on HIV/AIDS (INTERNA) has been active since 2007 and brings together all major faiths working on HIV issues. In 2009, UNAIDS organized a satellite meeting on faith-based approaches to HIV at the 9th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bali, Indonesia. Recently UNAIDS worked with the Ministry of Religious Affairs to hold a national dialogue on sexuality and HIV, during which the role of faith-based leaders in working with men who have sex with men, and transgender persons was examined from a perspective of tolerance and understanding.
- In Ukraine, UNAIDS partnered the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations, one of the most diverse and productive national associations of faith-based organizations in Europe. For the first time in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, and with the direct support of UNAIDS, the Council developed and endorsed a National Inter-Religious Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care, which reflects a commitment to end intolerance, stigma and discrimination towards the most at-risk populations.
- In Papua New Guinea, church leaders from 19 Christian denominations came together in May 2010 to launch the Christian Leaders Alliance, a network committed to providing an effective response to AIDS in the country.

- In Morocco, as part of the national response to AIDS, and in the framework of the National Strategic Plan 2007-2011, a fruitful partnership was established between UNAIDS, its co-sponsors, the national AIDS programme and the "Rabita Mohammedia des Oulémas", a faith-based institution promoting the values of moderate Islam in Moroccan society. The activities carried out under this partnership have contributed significantly to the sensitization and engagement of Muslim scholars and imams throughout the Kingdom on HIV prevention and the fight against stigma and discrimination on religious grounds.

- In Pakistan, UNAIDS has partnered the Interfaith Council on Health, the National AIDS Control Programme and UNICEF in supporting training for religious leaders in 55 districts and towns of Pakistan. The purpose of the training is to guide scholars on how to spread awareness on issues related to HIV during Friday sermons.

United Nations Children's Fund

61. During the period under review, UNICEF accomplished significant strides in its work with multireligious structures and religious communities to promote the rights of children.

62. UNICEF and Religions for Peace, a global multireligious coalition promoting common action among the world's religious communities for peace, embarked on a multi-year project to strengthen the capacity of religious communities, particularly interreligious mechanisms, to protect children affected by conflict, including by working together effectively with child protection actors. During the period under review, projects were identified for implementation at the country level in Kenya, Liberia and the Philippines.

63. As part of the above-mentioned multi-year project, UNICEF and Religions for Peace organized a consultation that brought together 35 experts and key external actors to discuss the role of religious communities in protecting children affected by conflict and outline concrete action to strengthen their collaboration with child rights organizations.

64. UNICEF and Religions for Peace published *From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities can do to Eliminate Violence against Children*. The joint guide, produced with input from religious actors and child protection specialists, is intended to help religious communities harness their spiritual, moral and social strengths to prevent, respond to and eliminate violence against children, in keeping with the recommendations of the 2006 report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children (A/61/299). *From Commitment to Action* includes concrete suggestions as to how those actors can work effectively with Governments, civil society and United Nations agencies.

65. UNICEF participated in the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children launched in 2009 and intended to mobilize the power and influence of religious communities to promote children's rights each year during the week of 20 November. UNICEF-related activities included country-level advocacy and awareness-raising in five countries, Botswana, Gambia, Jordan, Mauritania and the Sudan, and support to events organized by organizations participating in the World Day in Brazil, Nepal, Panama, Sri Lanka and the United Republic of Tanzania.

UNICEF involvement in the World Day in 2010 will be concerned with maternal health and child survival, with a focus on breastfeeding.

66. UNICEF country offices continued to work with multireligious structures and religious communities to promote the rights of children, including:

(a) In Mauritania, UNICEF worked with the Imams' and Religious Leaders' Network for Child Rights to issue a fatwa to end corporal punishment in mahadras and secular primary schools;

(b) In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding with five of the country's largest Christian, Muslim and traditional religious groups to scale up the promotion of key child survival practices at the household and community levels. Together, their networks have the potential to reach more than half of the population;

(c) In Botswana, UNICEF worked with religious organizations to develop faith-specific sermon notes and religious training materials linked to promoting children's rights. The project consists of the publication of 37 different books developed in partnership with 13 different religious organizations.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

67. UNESCO supported youth initiatives in the field of interreligious dialogue. A youth workshop was organized during the Parliament of the World's Religions 2009 in Melbourne, Australia, in the context of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The workshop was followed up by a special focus on Latin American youth in the framework of the Third Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations.

68. The empowerment of women for interreligious dialogue is another area of focus, which includes the organization of training courses and the development of specific competencies for reconciliation, trauma healing and experience sharing. One illustration is the "Women in interfaith dialogue" initiatives engaging women of faith in inter- and intra-faith dialogue, peace and social transformation in Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and the Sudan, an activity that ended early in 2010. Eagerness was expressed with regard to extending it to neighbouring countries, such as Uganda and Rwanda. As women of faith rarely engage in interreligious dialogue and many of their good practices have not even been documented or researched, a study has been undertaken to describe their initiatives, thus making them more visible and effective.

69. UNESCO pursued its efforts for the elaboration and dissemination of good practices nationally and regionally, through the Network of the University Networking and Planning Programme (UNITWIN) UNESCO Chairs on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network, and the UNESCO International Coalition of Cities against Racism, a global platform for exchanging ideas and experience to counter destabilizing factors that can lead to insecurity, prejudice and violence. Since 2004, six regional coalitions have been created.

70. A toolkit for educators on how to teach respect for and understanding of different faiths and ethical beliefs, developed in partnership with UNICEF and the Arigato Foundation, is intended to prepare teachers to educate for dialogue.

United Nations Information Centres

71. On the International Day of Peace, the United Nations Information Centre in Maseru, together with the Baha'i Faith and Development for Peace Education, organized a prayer session as a way of encouraging unity in diversity among various religious groups in Lesotho. The activities organized by the United Nations Information Centre in Dar es Salaam, in cooperation with the World Conference on Religions and Peace and other religious and non-religious organizations, included prayers of different faiths. The United Nations Information Centre in Zimbabwe worked with the Harare Girls High School to bring together representatives of various faiths to offer prayers for peace in different languages and according to different religious traditions.

VI. A rights-based approach to dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions

72. General Assembly resolution 64/81 and previous resolutions on the same subject contain specific provisions on human rights and non-discrimination and on a rights-based approach to intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, adopted by the Assembly in resolution 56/6, also made the promotion and protection of human rights one of its objectives and principles for action. Some United Nations entities have carried out activities that directly contribute to the implementation of those resolutions.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

73. In resolution 64/81, the General Assembly recognized that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations are sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind. In February 2010, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized an expert seminar on the theme "Implementing cultural rights: nature, issues at stake and challenges" in partnership with the International Organization of the Francophonie, UNESCO and the Observatory of Diversity and Cultural Rights. The seminar, which was attended by representatives of States, national human rights institutions and international and non-governmental organizations examined, inter alia, the relationship between cultural rights and cultural diversity.[1]

74. In its resolution 64/81, the General Assembly emphasized that while everyone had the right to freedom of expression, the exercise of that right carried with it special duties and responsibilities and might therefore be subject to certain restrictions, as stipulated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In an effort to contribute to the prevention and elimination of incitement to religious hatred and its negative consequences on human rights, OHCHR will hold, in 2011, a series of expert workshops on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial or religious hatred. The objectives of those workshops will be to gain a better understanding of legislative patterns, judicial practices and policies in different regions, to discuss the state of implementation of the prohibition of incitement in conformity with international standards and to identify possible action at all levels.

[1] Seminar documents can be consulted at www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/cultural_rights/seminar1-2feb2010.htm.

OHCHR organized briefings on the expert workshops for Member States in May 2010 in Geneva and New York, and for non-governmental organizations in June 2010 in Geneva.

Special procedures of the Human Rights Council

75. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in his report to the Assembly (A/64/295) expressed the view that while legislative measures are necessary to prohibit and sanction the dissemination of ideas based in racial superiority or hatred, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against a specific group of persons, such measures are usually insufficient to effectively prevent and combat the aforementioned phenomena. Therefore, the Special Rapporteur encouraged States to combat negative stereotypes and discrimination and to promote intercultural understanding.

76. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, in his report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/14/23), emphasized the role of the right to freedom of expression and access to means of communication in combating discrimination as well as fostering intercultural understanding and dialogue. The Special Rapporteur deeply regretted the continuing existence of stereotypes and prejudice as a result of racism and discrimination and the erroneous application of national security and anti-terrorism policies. He called for the development of a culture of peace based on intercultural dialogue and tolerance which promoted respect in intercultural relationships, and called on States to promote policies on dialogue and education that fostered understanding and respect in cultural exchanges.

77. In resolution 64/81 the General Assembly recognized that cultural diversity and the pursuit of cultural development by all peoples and nations were sources of mutual enrichment for the cultural life of humankind. In March 2009, the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 10/23, established the mandate of independent expert in the field of cultural rights as a new special procedure. The independent expert assumed her functions on 1 November 2009 and submitted her first report to the Human Rights Council at its fourteenth session (A/HRC/14/36), containing her preliminary views on the relationship between cultural rights, cultural diversity and the universality of human rights.

78. In resolution 64/81 also, the Assembly affirmed that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constituted important dimensions of the dialogue among civilizations and of the culture of peace. The former Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, in her report to the Human Rights Council at its thirteenth session (A/HRC/13/40), considered that States might envisage providing a forum for interreligious and intra-religious dialogue. Such a dialogue should neither be formulated in a compulsory or condescending manner nor imposed by the State, and State policies should give room and space for a variety of religions and beliefs, thus encouraging opportunities for interaction and understanding. The best approach, as noted by the former Special Rapporteur, is when the initiative for such activities comes from the religious communities themselves, for which the State may then provide facilities or some funding.

79. While joint declarations by religious leaders are important, the former Special Rapporteur emphasized the vital role of initiatives at the grass-roots level.

Interreligious dialogue, she submitted, should not only be an intellectual and theological exercise, but prompt the silent majority to look for a common strategy on how to reduce tensions and promote tolerance. Exchanges of views should also include believers who are dispassionate about their faith, as well as atheistic and non-theistic believers and members of religious minorities. Any dialogue would also benefit from the views of women, who tend to be marginalized in major interreligious and intra-religious dialogue events and are among those who suffer most from religious intolerance (A/HRC/13/40, para. 61).

80. On the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, 21 May 2010, a number of special procedures of the Human Rights Council issued a joint statement stressing that human rights and cultural diversity go hand in hand. Drawing attention to the universal values of human rights as a bridge among all cultures, the experts pointed out that human rights should not be subservient to social, cultural or religious norms. They underlined that cultural diversity should not be used to support segregation and harmful traditional practices which, in the name of culture, seek to sanctify differences that run counter to the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights.[2]

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

81. The adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (resolution 61/295, annex) was a historic step towards addressing the concerns of indigenous peoples, as well as a symbolic gesture demonstrating the international community's willingness to work with indigenous peoples. The Declaration is increasingly supported by Member States. Some have undertaken significant constitutional and legislative reforms to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples.

82. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held its ninth session in May 2010 at United Nations Headquarters. The theme of that session was "Development with culture and identity" and to prepare for it, an international expert group meeting was convened in January 2010 in New York. One of the main aims of the meeting was to analyse human rights enshrined in international standards and policies and how they contribute to indigenous peoples' concept of development with culture and identity.

83. At its ninth session, the Forum noted that development paradigms of modernization and industrialization have often resulted in the destruction of indigenous peoples' ways of life. Indigenous peoples continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty, malnutrition and a lack of access to basic services. Indigenous peoples and their cultures are often portrayed as obstacles to progress and their values seen as contradictory to market economies, consumption and competition. Indigenous peoples' concepts of development are characterized by a holistic approach based on collective rights, security and self-governance of lands, territories and resources. Those concepts, while forward-looking, are built on tradition and respect for ancestors. They are based on restorative philosophy underpinned by values of reciprocity, solidarity, equilibrium, sustainability, sharing and collectivity. Any dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations would therefore benefit from indigenous perspectives, which constitute an important and exceptionally rich part of cultural diversity.

[2] See full statement at www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/cultural_rights.

VII. Conclusion

84. The present report testifies to the diversity of activities carried out by many actors in the United Nations system to support in a concrete manner the dialogue among cultures, religions and civilizations and to implement the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in those fields. Some of those activities focus on cultures, religions or civilizations. Others touch on those dimensions of the dialogue without a specific connection to any one of them in particular, making it sometimes difficult to link the activities to a given resolution or United Nations process, such as on interreligious and intercultural dialogue, dialogue among civilizations, a culture of peace or the promotion of tolerance and non-violence. In that context, the Assembly may wish to consider those matters in a consolidated manner in future. Such an approach would be more easily understandable for non-United Nations actors and would contribute to increasing the visibility of United Nations system activities in those fields. The lessons learned from the International Decade for a Culture of Peace, which ends in 2010, and the follow-up that may be provided to it are an opportunity to elaborate a broader framework which would encompass intercultural, interreligious, intercivilizational and other dimensions. Such an approach would allow for a more coherent course of action on the part of the United Nations system in this important field of work.

85. In addition to the activities carried out by United Nations actors, Member States, regional organizations and civil society organizations have undertaken major initiatives, such as the Non-Aligned Movement meeting on interfaith dialogue, hosted by the Government of the Philippines in March 2010. The President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly took part in the meeting, thereby ensuring a welcome connection between that initiative and United Nations efforts in this field. Other interactions between United Nations-sponsored and regional and global initiatives of this kind should be encouraged.